

Alice Theatre
1st silent Movie

Alice Theatre

Avon Theatre

Reel Theatre
(old Avon)

Reel Theatre

Ideal Theatre

On Tuesday, April 6, 1847, conference was held at Winter Quarters. It was during this session that Brigham Young made known to the people the plans formulated by himself and the other leaders for the journey to the far West. It was explained that the idea of the Saints was to explore the region of the Great Basin and to find, if possible, a home in the heart of the Rocky Mountains where the people could settle in peace and permanency.

Heber C. Kimball, who had started six teams westward the day before and had formed the first camp as a starting place, had returned to Winter Quarters to make his report and to be present at the conference. On April 6 he began to make the last preparations for the gathering of the immigrants who were to undertake the journey.

On Wednesday, April 7, the pioneers commenced to move out of Winter Quarters. The day's destination was the first camp on the Elkhorn River, the rendezvous formed by Heber C. Kimball. This camp was designated as the place where the pioneers could assemble their outfits for a few days and apportion the quantity of goods to be carried along, divide the companies, and otherwise arrange the train with a view toward regular organization. . . .

On Thursday, April 8, another start by others of the company was made from Winter Quarters for the rendezvous on the Elkhorn. With the expectation that the pioneer camp could be moved forward from the Elkhorn, more of the members chosen for the trip had left Winter Quarters, but the departure was delayed by an important event. This was the return from England of Parley P. Pratt. He arrived in Winter Quarters, and his return was hailed with joy by the people. That evening a council was held at the office of Dr. Willard Richards, and Elder Pratt made quite a lengthy report upon the general condition of affairs of the Church in the English mission.

Friday, April 9, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, and a party of pioneers left Winter Quarters for the Elkhorn. When the party got to Cutler's Park, those who had gathered previously joined the leaders, and the whole party moved forward to within four miles of Pappea Creek which was thirteen miles west of Winter Quarters. Here camp was made for the night, and the two leaders, Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball, lodged for the first time in the former's wagon which was fitted up especially for the trip.

The greater portion of the pioneer company was now on the road to the Elkhorn. Brigham Young and the Twelve were still of the number, and progress was made in every way by the members. Elder John Taylor returned from England via New Orleans and brought President Young over two thousand dollars in gold which had been contributed to the Church by the British members. This seemed to be an act of Providence.

On Sunday, April 11, the main body of the company reached the Elkhorn River. The party crossed the stream by means of a raft which had been built by some of the earlier arrivals at a point two and a half miles south of the junction of the Platte and Elkhorn rivers.¹⁷

"Early-day travelers didn't think too highly of the Platte, describing it on occasion as a mile wide and six inches deep, too thick to drink, too thin to plow, hard to cross because of quicksand, impossible to navigate, too yellow to wash in, and too pale to paint with."¹⁸

Winter Quarters was emptied of residents after the summer of 1848. By 1853 only the cemetery remained, and in 1856 settlers moving into the area named it Florence, which was eventually absorbed in the growth of Omaha, Nebraska, and became a part of that city.

In Florence City Park in the area that was Winter Quarters, a historical marker stands which memorializes the pioneers:

Here in 1848 an oppressed people fleeing from a vengeful mob found a haven in the wilderness. Winter Quarters, established under the direction of the Mormon leader Brigham Young, sheltered more than 3,000 people during the winter of 1846-1847. Housed in log cabins, sod houses, and dugouts, they lacked adequate provisions. When spring arrived more than six hundred of the faithful lay buried in the cemetery on the hill. Winter Quarters became the administration center of a great religious movement.

In the spring of 1847 a pioneer band left Winter Quarters to cross the Plains to the Great Salt Lake Valley. Thousands of others followed this trail. In 1855, Young was forced to utilize handcarts for transportation. The first company, comprising about five hundred persons, left here on July 17 and reached the Valley on September 26, 1856.¹⁹

ELKHORN RIVER CROSSING

The Elkhorn River, some twenty miles to the west of Winter Quarters, was selected as the staging place for the Mormons to



old Ideal



Jordanelle
Entertainment Buildings

Jordanelle Dance Hall
" Resort

Jordanelle
Entertainment Bldgs.